A

PRESENT

FOR

PROTESTANTS, ROMANISTS, and JEWS:

BEING A

FREE INQUIRY

After the CHURCH or KINGDOM of the MESSIAH:

IN A

LETTER

TO THE

Titular Popiſh Biſhop of *London*,

Author of a TRACT, intituled,

The UNERRING AUTHORITY *of the* CATHOLIC *Church in Matters of Faith*, &c.

By a COSMOPOLITE.

Let ſubtle Schoolmen teach theſe Friends to fight,
More ſtudious to divide than to unite,
And Grace and Virtue, Senſe and Reaſon ſplit
With all the raſh Dexterity of Wit:
Wits, juſt like Fools, at War about a Name,
Have full as oft no Meaning, or the ſame. POPE.

Yea, and why judge ye not of yourſelves what is right?
Luke xii. 57.

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REVEREND SIR,

WITHOUT any Intention to detract from the Merits of your *private* Character, but only for the Sake of Truth, I addreſs you in this public Manner. The Subject of the following Sheets being of the greateſt Importance, as you yourſelf acknowledge, I may perhaps be *ſometimes* too warm, and, in conſequence of that Warmth, a little too poſitive: Yet, upon the whole, I hope it will appear, that I have not deviated from Modeſty, Candor and Charity, *oftner* that thoſe with whom I differ in Opinion.

Having a great deal of Matter before me, which I want to bring into a narrow Compaſs, my Preamble muſt be ſhort. When the Subject is material and the Reaſoning good, a Book needs no Preface: If the one is trifling and the other bad, a Preface cannot make them better.

There is no Point clearer in the Bible, than that the *Jews* ſhall be converted and dwell again in the Land of *Canaan* in the latter Days: And it is no leſs clear, in the Reaſon and Nature of Things, that the Iniquities, the ſcandalous Examples of Chriſtians, the many Sects into which they are ſplit, the endleſs Diviſions and Quarrels between Chriſtian Princes, are inſurmountable Bars to the Converſion of that Peo-

ple. When a *Jew* beholds the idolatrous Practices of ſome Nations that profeſs themſelves Followers of the *Meſſiah*, and the various, diſcordant Creeds, or Syſtems of Faith, of Mens making, eſtabliſhed in all as Terms of Communion or Conditions of Salvation; he muſt be a Man of great Penetration, or elſe have an extraordinary Meaſure of divine Grace, to ſift the Wheat from the Chaff, and ſettle himſelf in the Truth. Such Diviſions among Chriſtians ſtrengthen his Prejudices and confirm him in his Incredulity: In vain do they tell him that the *Meſſiah* came above 1700 Years ago; he obſtinately ſhuts his Eyes to all the Proofs they can bring of it, becauſe they cannot prove, to his Satisfaction, that they are the Diſciples of *Chriſt*. If Chriſtendom acted up to the Doctrine of the *Prince* of *Peace*, the *Jews* would ſoon be convinced that he rules in the World by the *Comforter*, the *Spirit* of *Truth*, whom he promiſed and did actually ſend a few Days after his Aſcenſion, and does ſtill ſend, though not in the ſame miraculous Manner, to all that ſincerely deſire to be directed by him.

But how can we expect Unity, Harmony and Peace in the Chriſtian World, while any Part of it thinks itſelf abſolutely, not conditionally, ſecured from Errors in Matters of Faith? So long as any Set of Men believe themſelves *infallible*, the natural Conſequence is, that whether they be in Error or not, they will never have Charity for others: A firm Perſuaſion of being *always* in the Right, is neceſſarily attended with a domineering Spirit, and keeps Men under a moral Impoſſibility of

of Amendment. This ſtumbling Block muſt therefore be taken out of the Way, before any good can be done for the *Jews*. To attempt to put that Nation on a better Footing in temporal Concerns, and to be at the ſame Time indifferent about their ſpiritual Intereſts, looks too much like Beginning the Work at the wrong End.

That the Diſpute about Infallibility is a Point worthy of the moſt ſerious Conſideration, is aſſerted by all the Divines of the *Roman* Church.—'There is no Controverſy in all 'polemical Divinity (ſay you) the right Deci-'ſion of which is of more Importance, than of 'this concerning the *unerring Authority*, or, 'as it is commonly term'd, the *Infallibility* of the 'Church of *Chriſt*: Becauſe the Reſolution of 'this Difficulty is, in effect, the ſhorteſt Way 'to put an End to all Diſputes; at leaſt, if it 'may be fairly reſolved on the Catholic Side: 'For who will preſume to diſpute againſt the 'Sentence of a Judge, whom he is forced to 'acknowledge *infallible* in his Judgment?'

To fix this Infallibility in the *Romiſh* Church, is the Deſign of a Treatiſe you publiſhed ſome Years ago, entitled, *The* UNERRING *Authority of the Catholic Church in Matters of Faith*, which to this Day is cry'd up by your Party as a Maſter-piece; in which I agree with them in one Senſe: Nay, they boaſt that it has never been anſwered; for which very Reaſon I have attempted a brief Confutation of it, which I ſend into the World only as a Specimen of the right Way of dealing with Pretenders to Infallibility.

In examining this Claim to *Infallibility*, I purpoſe to follow you no farther than the Places you quote from the *Old-Teſtament* to prove, that the Church of *Rome* is poſſeſſed of it; yet I ſhall take the Liberty to expound Paſſages by parallel ones, and take the Senſe from the Context, where you loſe Sight of it, in order to favour your Syſtem. This Method I chuſe for Brevity's Sake, becauſe the Texts you produce from the *Old Teſtament* being once ſet in a true Light, any intelligent, well diſpoſed Reader may eaſily find out the right Application of the Paſſages you have quoted from the *New* Teſtament. And as in *ſetting out* upon an Inquiry *where* and *what* the true Church of *Chriſt* is, all the Diſputants or Inquirers neither can nor ought to have any other Guide but their own Reaſon, to judge of the Characters and Marks given of that Church in Holy Writ; ſo I humbly preſume you will not deny, that the *firſt* Steps we take muſt be Acts of meer Reaſon, however we may pleaſe to captivate our Underſtandings to her Authority, and acquieſce implicitly in every thing ſhe propounds as Articles of Faith, *after* we are fully ſatisfied that ſhe is the undefiled Spouſe of *Chriſt*, who neither can nor will lead her Children into Error. Therefore, waving any Arguments I might borrow from much better Pens who have already treated this Subject in a different Method, I ſhall only make the beſt uſe I can of my own Faculties, in ſearching for the Senſe of the Texts you have applied to the *Roman* Church: And as for human Authorities on either Side of the Queſtion, it is to be obſerved, that

that the *Fathers* of the primitive Church, how much ſoever they may deſerve our Veneration as learned or pious Men, are not allowed by any Sect of Chriſtians to be infallible; ſo that to follow you in your Citations from their Writings, or bring any other Paſſages of theirs againſt you, would be an unprofitable Labour, ſince their Sentiments are not concluſive. My Buſineſs, then, being only with the *Fountain* of divine Knowledge, I proceed on a Preſumption, as all Writers do, that either the Learned or the Unlearned may find in this little Tract ſomething not unworthy of their Notice.—Thus much by way of Introduction: Let us now open the Debate with the firſt Preliminary of your Work, which is,

That Chriſt hath always a true Church upon Earth.

This was never denied by any that believed in *Chriſt:* But it does not follow, that his Church has hitherto been confined to any particular City or Nation. The Bible does not afford ſo much as one ſpecial Promiſe of this Kind made to any People *actually* or *formerly* profeſſing Chriſtianity. The Goſpel has been preached to many Nations, and many have not yet heard the Sound of it: And of thoſe that did receive it, ſome have long ſince corrupted it, and others have entirely loſt it. However, we ſhall quickly find a *Place* for this true Church, where it will be for ever ſo viſibly and glorioſly fixed, that no People will miſtake it, or refuſe to join in Communion with it.

The

The firſt Paſſage you produce, from the Old Teſtament, to argue us into a Belief that the *Roman* Church is, and has been theſe ſeventeen Centuries, the true Church of *Chriſt*, is the 8th Verſe of the 48th Pſalm: '*As we have* '*heard, ſo have we ſeen, in the City of the Lord* '*of Hoſts, in the City of our God, God will eſta-* '*bliſh it for ever.*'—This Pſalm does indeed relate to the Kingdom or Church of *Chriſt*; but how it may any Way ſerve the Turn of *Popery*, is very far from being obvious, at leaſt to me. The *City* of the *Lord* of Hoſts muſt either be the whole Earth, or ſome particular Place: If the latter, it was incumbent on you to ſhew, that when the Prophets of the Old Teſtament ſpeak of the *City* of *God*, they have a ſpecial Reſpect to *Rome*. For my part, I cannot apply the above Verſe, nor the whole Scope of the Pſalm, to any paſt State of the Chriſtian Church, but think it is referrable to a future and more ample, peaceable and perfect State of it; and that *Jeruſalem*, not *Rome*, is to be the Head or Mother Church; becauſe *Chriſt* forbidding Men to ſwear by *Jeruſalem*, gave this as a Reaſon for it, that it was the City of the *great King*; and it may be fairly preſumed he did not then ſtrictly ſpeak of the *rebellious* City that was to be deſtroyed in a few Years, but of that which is to be built when the *Fullneſs of the Gentiles ſhall be come in.* This will be farther illuſtrated as we go on.

Your next Proof is *Pſalm* lxxii. 5, 7. '*They* '*ſhall fear thee as long as the Sun and Moon* '*endure, throughout all Generations. In his*

Days

'*Days* (that is after the Coming of *Christ*) *shall* '*the Righteous flourish, and Abundance of Peace* '*so long as the Moon endureth.*'—That this is prophetically descriptive of the *Messiah*'s Kingdom, is not to be denied: But, for the better understanding of it, suffer me to help you out with two more Verses of the same Psalm; a Course which I shall frequently take with you, for the Information of *your* * Flock, few of whom have the Bible in their Hands.

8. *He shall have Dominion also from Sea to Sea, and from the River unto the Ends of the Earth.*

11. *Yea, all Kings shall fall down before him, all Nations shall serve him.*

In your Opinion the Prophecy in this Psalm has long ago been fulfilled, and must be applied to the See of *Rome* and the Churches in Communion with her: In my Judgment it has not yet been fulfilled, and yet I acknowledge that *Christ* has always had a true Church upon Earth; but it has hitherto been kept under a Cloud by the Powers of Darkness and their human Agents. Every Man conversant with History knows, that those Parts of the World, which we call Christendom, have been these many Ages as much, if not more divided and distracted than any other Parts of the Earth: Agreeably to the Saying of our blessed *Saviour*, that he did not come to bring Peace on Earth, but a Sword; which was only prophetically spoken, in order

* The *Romanists* in the Diocese of *London*.

to

to undeceive thoſe who expected that his peaceable, flouriſhing Kingdom, would have taken Place at that Time. Nevertheleſs he is, in the ſtricteſt Senſe, the *Prince* of *Peace*; his Doctrine and Example breathe nothing but Peace and Good will to Men: But the roaring Lion, who goes about ſeeking whom he may devour, not being yet chained down in the bottomleſs Pit, inſpires the Rulers of the World with Pride, Ambition and Covetouſneſs, ſets Nation againſt Nation and Kingdom againſt Kingdom, ſows the Seeds of Diſcord and Strife in every Climate, and ſpreads the Flames of War all over the Face of the Earth. Hence it is that we have not yet ſeen the *Righteous flouriſh*, if thereby *David* meant that the World ſhould be governed righteouſly; and nothing elſe, I think, can be meant, unleſs you inſiſt upon applying the Prophecy to thoſe ignorant Ages when the Biſhops of *Rome* trampled on Kings and Emperors, and the Thunder of the *Vatican* kept the World in awe: But how righteous thoſe ſovereign Pontiffs were, let the Hiſtorians of their Times bear Witneſs. Neither have we ever ſeen or heard of any thing like peaceable Days, or *Abundance of Peace*, as the Royal Prophet emphatically expreſſes it. Therefore, as not one Tittle of God's Word can fail, we ought to look for the Completion of this Prophecy in its obvious, natural Senſe, and not run away with a ſilly Notion that the Pſalmiſt had an Eye to the See of *Rome*, or to any Nation or Church that conforms to her Doctrine and Practices. Shew me only one ſingle Age, or even but half a Century, ſince *Chriſt*'s Aſcenſion, wherein the World has enjoyed Reſt and Peace,

Peace, and I will give up the Point. And as to the great Extent of *Christ*'s Kingdom, predicted in this Psalm, it cannot be said that we have yet seen *all Kings falling down before him, and all Nations serving him:* Scarcely one *Fourth* Part of the Earth owns the *Messiah*; and in this small Part, what Ignorance, what Corruptions prevail! How many Reliques of Paganism are retained! How few do Honour to their Profession! Now, to suppose that inspired Men use Hyperboles in Subjects of this Importance to Mankind, would be highly injurious to God's Veracity; and therefore we must take this Prophecy in the literal Sense.

After this you give us a long String of Verses out of the 89th Psalm, viz. the 3d and 4th, and then the 27th to the 37th inclusive; all which, for Brevity's Sake, I shall not transcribe, but refer the Reader to them. 'The glorious 'Promise in this Psalm, you say, is under-'stood of the Church of *Christ*, the spiritual 'Seed of *David*, by *Calvin* himself, l. 4. Inst. 'c. 1. Sect. 27. and indeed cannot by any 'Christian be applied to the carnal Seed and 'Throne of *David*, which is long since gone 'to Ruin.'—*Geneva* and *Rome* being thus agreed in the Point, I likewise grant it: But then, that we may not bewilder ourselves, we should take this Observation along with us, which will be found of great Use for coming at the true Sense of the Prophecies of the Old Testament relative to the Church, *viz.* That the Prophets, in their lofty and glorious Descriptions of the *Messiah*'s Kingdom, generally have an Eye to the happy Time of the Union of

 both

both *Jews* and *Gentiles* in one Faith and under one Head, and but very ſparingly touch upon the intermediate Space, *i. e.* the Ages between this Æra and the firſt Promulgation of the Goſpel, which include the Conflicts of the Church with Hereticks and Idolaters; the bloody Perſecutions ſhe ſuffered under Heathen Kings and Emperors; the Afflictions ſhe has endured under carnal, worldly minded Princes, who, though profeſſing Chriſtianity in ſome Shape or other, have yet, through Remiſſneſs or Ignorance, ſuffered the Spouſe of *Chriſt* to be driven into the *Wilderneſs*, nay, have been ſometimes directly inſtrumental in oppreſſing and keeping her in Bondage; utterly diſregarding both Law and Goſpel, or making Religion a meer State Engine to ſerve their Ambition and other diſorderly Paſſions. Now, Sir, if the Paſſages you have produced from the 89th Pſalm muſt be underſtood of the *glorious* Eſtate of the Church of *Chriſt*, in what Senſe are we to take the reſt of this Pſalm, from v. 37 to the End? It is manifeſtly the *Reverſe*, and conſequently may be taken for the low, diſconſolate Condition of the Faithful in divers Ages and different Places. However, I recommend both Sides of the Picture to your farther Conſideration, begging you would be pleaſed to ſolve the Difficulty by an infallible Sentence.

Having, as you imagine, ſo firmly laid your Foundation in the Pſalms, you proceed thus: ‘ In fine, to paſs over many other Texts, which ‘ we ſhall quote hereafter, the prophet *Daniel* ‘ bears evident Teſtimony to the Church's ‘ Perpetuity,

'Perpetuity, when interpreting the Dream of 'Nebuchadnezzar, Chap. ii. 44. he tells us, 'In the Days of these Kings shall the God of 'Heaven set up a Kingdom [the Kingdom or 'Church of Christ] which shall never be de-'stroyed——And it shall stand for ever.'——It is certain that this Passage, taken singly, does pretty well for your System, and may satisfy such as care not for nice Disquisitions that require long Application: Here we have a Kingdom set up, which is to stand for ever; and you would have us take the *Roman* Church for that Kingdom. A brief Exposition of the whole Chapter would have been very acceptable to the Illiterate of your Communion, who certainly cannot form any clear Notion of Times and Circumstances from the single Verse you have been pleased to give them: But since you have declined the Task, I shall attempt it.

Nebuchadnezzar having utterly forgot a Dream that had extremely discomposed his Mind, *Daniel* is brought before him, and not only reveals, but also gives him the Interpretation of it, as follows:

V. 31. *Thou, O King, sawest, and behold, a great Image: This great Image, whose Brightness was excellent, stood before thee, and the Form thereof was terrible.*

32. *This Image's Head was of fine Gold, his Breast and his Arms of Silver, his Belly and his Thighs of Brass.*

33. *His Legs of Iron, his Feet part of Iron and part of Clay.*

34. *Thou ſaweſt till that a Stone was cut out without Hands, which ſmote the Image upon his Feet that were of Iron and Clay, and brake them to Pieces.*

35. *Then was the Iron, the Clay, the Braſs, the Silver and the Gold broken to Pieces together, and became like the Chaff of the Summer-threſſing Floors, and the Wind carried them away, that no Place was found for them: And the Stone that ſmote the Image became a great Mountain, and filled the whole Earth.*

Having thus related the Dream, after a reſpectful introductory Compliment, the Prophet ſays to *Nebuchadnezzar*, v. 38. *Thou art this Head of Gold.*

39. *And after thee ſhall ariſe another Kingdom inferior to thee, and another third Kingdom of Braſs, which ſhall bear Rule over all the Earth.*

40. *And the fourth Kingdom ſhall be ſtrong as Iron: Foraſmuch as Iron breaketh in Pieces, and ſubdueth all Things: And as Iron that breaketh all theſe, ſhall it break in Pieces, and bruize.*

41. *And whereas thou ſaweſt the Feet and Toes, Part of Potters Clay, and Part of Iron: The Kingdom ſhall be divided, but there ſhall be in it of the Strength of the Iron, foraſmuch as thou ſaweſt the Iron mixt with miry Clay.*

42. *And as the Toes of the Feet were Part of Iron, and Part of Clay; so the Kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.*

43. *And whereas thou sawest Iron mixt with miry Clay, they shall mingle themselves with the Seed of Men: But they shall not cleave one to another, even as Iron is not mixed with Clay.*

44. *And in the Days of these Kings shall the God of Heaven set up a Kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: And the Kingdom shall not be left to other People, but it shall break in Pieces, and consume all these Kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.*

45. *Forasmuch as thou sawest that the Stone was cut out of the Mountain without Hands, and that it brake in Pieces the Iron, the Brass, the Clay, the Silver and the Gold; the great God hath made known to the King what shall come to pass hereafter: And the Dream is certain, and the Interpretation thereof sure.*

This Image, I think, is allowed by all Commentators to signify *literally* the *four* great Monarchies: The Point is so clear, that no Man conversant with History does doubt it. In a *spiritual* Sense I beg Leave, but with Submission to better Judges, to take the Image for an Emblem of *Idolatry*, which runs thro' the *Babylonian*, *Persian*, *Grecian* and *Roman* Empires, gradually growing more base and abominable; otherwise, methinks, the Order of the Metals ought to have been inverted, the Head made of

of Iron and Clay, and the Legs and Toes of Gold. But, not to insist positively on this, let us come directly to the Point that more immediately concerns you.

Christ, the *Stone* mentioned above, was born in the Reign of *Augustus*, when the *Roman* Kingdom was in the Meridian of its Strength and Glory: But he did not then smite the Image upon the *Legs* nor the *Feet*; for that Monarchy still continued very powerful for about four hundred Years after, tho' sometimes terribly shaken by the *Goths* and other barbarous Nations. Towards the End of the fifth Century it was quite broken in the *West*, and out of its Ruins *ten* Kingdoms or Sovereignties arose; since which the *Eastern* Part of this Monarchy has been entirely swallowed up by the *Turks*. Thus the *two Iron Legs* are destroyed; the Strength, Grandeur and Dignity of the Empire are gone: But this, I apprehend, was not properly the Act of the *Stone* cut out without Hands, for *Christ*'s peculiar Part of the Work, in demolishing this Image, is the smiting it on the *Toes*; which Blow is not yet struck.

In the Reign of *Tiberius*, *Christ* began to preach the Gospel: This was precisely the Time of the setting up the Kingdom of God, poor and oppressed in its Beginnings, the great Image standing then, and for a long Time after, on its Iron Legs. Of this Kingdom it is said, that *it shall never be destroyed*, i. e. all the Efforts of the *Roman* Government to subvert it should prove fruitless; the bloody Persecutions of

of the heathen Emperors having only ſerved to ſpread it farther, and encreaſe the Number of Chriſtians: Since which it has weathered out many other Storms, reſiſting the joint Attacks of Superſtition and Infidelity, which have been labouring, for above a thouſand Years paſt, to extinguiſh the Light of the Goſpel. Then the Prophet notes, that this Kingdom *ſhall not be left to other People*; i. e. no other Empire ſhall come after it, as the *Babylonian* Monarchy was ſucceeded by the *Perſian*, and this by the *Grecian*, which in its Turn was ſwallowed up by the *Roman: But it ſhall break in Pieces and conſume all theſe Kingdoms*, i. e. put down Tyranny, Superſtition and Idolatry all over the World, triumph over the Devices of the Father of Lies, and confound the Machinations of all his human Agents. Now, the Concluſion is, that hitherto we have only ſeen the *afflicted* and *militant* Eſtate of the *Meſſiah*'s Kingdom: Its *peaceable* and *triumphant* Eſtate does not commence till the *Stone* ſmites the Image upon the *Toes* of *Iron* and *Clay*, i. e. the laſt, weak, divided, baſe, corrupt Eſtate of the *Roman* Kingdom; becauſe 'tis not till then that *all* the *four* Metals and the *Clay* are broken to pieces *together*, or all *falſe Worſhip* and *Reliques* of *Paganiſm* utterly aboliſhed: Nor does the *Stone*, till then, ſwell into a great Mountain, filling the whole Earth. Its Duration, in this temporal, triumphant Eſtate, is a thouſand Years, as we may gather from the 20th Chapter of St. *John*'s Revelation: In its ſpiritual Eſtate it is to endure eternally in Heaven. But the *eternal* does not exclude the *temporal* Duration; becauſe *Daniel* is deſcribing a Scene on *Earth*, a Succeſſion of

idolatrous

idolatrous Kingdoms, whoſe Power and very Names are at laſt annihilated by the Kingdom of God; and as the latter comes in the room of them, ſo that no Place is found for them, it muſt conſequently be likewiſe on *Earth*. All this is confirmed and illuſtrated in the 7th Chapter of the ſame Prophet, where we are told in Concluſion, that *the Kingdom and Dominion, and the Greatneſs of the Kingdom* under *the whole Heaven, ſhall be given to the People of the Saints of the moſt High, whoſe Kingdom is an everlaſting Kingdom, and all Dominions ſhall ſerve and obey him.*

Thus far it appears that *Chriſt* has always a true Church upon Earth, but that the Texts you have made uſe of to prove it, are not applicable to *Rome*. Proceed we now to your ſecond Preliminary, which is,

That Chriſt's Church upon Earth is always viſible.

This cannot be denied. In whatſoever State the Church may be, it muſt needs be viſible, tho' not to *every* Man. When *Jezabel* had ſlain the Lord's Prophets, *Elijah* thought himſelf the only remaining true Believer; and yet we read of many thouſands ſtill left in *Iſrael* that had not bowed the Knee to *Baal*; but though they were unknown to that great Prophet, they muſt needs have been viſible to many other Perſons, unleſs we ſuppoſe that each of them lived ſeparately in Caves, Mountains and Woods. The Light of the Goſpel may be ſometimes *eclipſed*, but

but never *totally* extinguiſhed: The Church of *Chriſt*, even while in the *Wilderneſs*, muſt have been conſpicuous enough to every one that loved the Truth, and held it in Righteouſneſs; for a Man may be a true Believer and a right Worſhipper of God, tho' his Biſhop teaches Hereſy and commits Idolatry.—But as this Way of Reaſoning may not be ſatisfactory to you, let us ſee how you prove this perpetual Viſibility.

For the firſt Proof you give us *Iſaiah* ii. 2, 3. '*And it ſhall come to paſs in the laſt Days, 'that the Mountain of the Lord's Houſe ſhall be 'eſtabliſhed in the Top of the Mountains, and 'ſhall be exalted above the Hills; and all Nations 'ſhall flow unto it. And many People ſhall go 'and ſay, Come ye, and let us go up to the Moun-'tain of the Lord, to the Houſe of the God of* 'Jacob, *and he will teach us of his Ways, and we 'will walk in his Paths; for out of* Zion *ſhall 'go forth the Law, and the Word of the Lord 'from* Jeruſalem.'

Here we have indeed a viſible and glorious Church; but the Queſtion is, Whether it has been ſo theſe 1700 Years paſt? I anſwer in the Negative. The Difference, then, between us lying in Point of Time and Place, let us endeavour to ſet the Matter in a clear Light.

Though ſome Divines, beſides thoſe of your Communion, may pleaſe to take the *Mountain of the Lord's Houſe* for *Chriſt's Church* in general, it is plain by the Context, that ſome particular Place is meant thereby; ſo plain in-

 deed,

deed, that it ſcarcely requires any Comment. We ſee all Nations flowing to it, and exhorting each other to go up to that Place, which the Prophet calls *Zion* and *Jeruſalem:* But in what Senſe we muſt take this *Jeruſalem*, is the grand Queſtion.

We know that out of *Zion* the Law did go forth, and the Word of the Lord from *Jeruſalem*, by the preaching of the *Meſſiah* and his Apoſtles; but this does not fully anſwer the Senſe of *Iſaiah*, who means, that the Law and the Word of the Lord not only *go forth from* Zion, but alſo *abide there*; in Conſequence of which all Nations flock to it. Now, though the Goſpel was firſt promulgated from *Jeruſalem*, who gave Ear to the Preachers? Very few indeed, when compared to the vaſt Numbers that rejected the good Tydings. Did all Nations then flow to the Church, or to *Jeruſalem?* No; the *Jews* were the *firſt* Perſecutors of *Chriſtianity*, and brought Deſtruction on themſelves for that and other Crimes: And afterwards the Rulers of the World ſet themſelves againſt the Church, and with all the cruel Devices that infernal Malice could invent, ſtrove to extirpate the Followers of *Chriſt*. Therefore, we cannot take that Time for the *laſt Days*.

But if you will inſiſt, that *Jeruſalem* ought to be taken in a figurative Senſe, as ſignifying the whole Church of *Chriſt*, wherefoever ſpread; I anſwer, that though this Senſe may ſometimes be adopted, yet it cannot be admitted in this Place; becauſe we need not be told that the Word of the Lord ſhall go forth from *his* Church,

Church, ſince no Man of common Senſe ever expected it ſhould proceed from another Quarter, or be found among any other Congregation. If this be all that we are to underſtand by *Jeruſalem*, the World may remain divided and diſtracted about Religion till the general Conflagration; ſince every Sect of Chriſtians may confidently cry up their own Communion for the ſpiritual *Zion*, and allegorize all the Prophecies in direct Contradiction to common Senſe and undeniable Facts.

It may, perhaps, be no Breach of Charity to ſuppoſe you were ſenſible that the 4th Verſe of *Iſaiah*'s ſecond Chapter might produce ſome Ideas very prejudicial to your Syſtem; and therefore you omitted it, though it has ſo manifeſt a Connection with the foregoing; for which very Reaſon I muſt not paſs it over. *And he ſhall judge among the Nations, and ſhall rebuke many People: And they ſhall beat their Swords into plow-Shares, and their Spears into Pruning-Hooks: Nation ſhall not lift up a Sword againſt Nation, neither ſhall they learn War any more.* The ſame we read in the 4th Chapter of *Micah*, who ſubjoins, *But they ſhall ſit every Man under his Vine and under his Fig-tree, and none ſhall make them afraid.*

Now I ſhould be glad to be informed in what Age this Prediction has been fulfilled. Has there been any Thing like peaceable Times in this World, ſince the Mountain of the Lord's Houſe was eſtabliſhed at *Rome*, where I preſume you would have us look for it? No ſuch Thing can be aſſerted; all Hiſtorians, all

Records bear Witneſs of the contrary: Therefore the Prophecy is yet to be fulfilled, and *Jeruſalem* is the Place from whence all Nations ſhall receive Inſtructions; which I ſhall endeavour to elucidate by the following Paſſages of *Zechariah*.

15-16 Chap. ii. ~~11, 12.~~ *And many Nations ſhall be joined to the Lord in that Day, and ſhall be my People: And I will dwell in the Midſt of thee, and thou ſhalt know that the Lord of Hoſts hath ſent me unto thee. And the Lord ſhall inherit Judah his Portion in the Holy Land, and ſhall chuſe Jeruſalem again.*—This cannot be the City they were rebuilding in *Zechariah*'s Time, becauſe none of the Gentile Nations were then joined to the Lord. The Perſon mentioned to be ſent, is *Chriſt*, whom the *Jews*, as well as the reſt of the infidel World, will acknowledge: By his Spirit (for I do not adopt the Notion of his perſonal Reſidence) he will dwell in his Church wherefoever extended, but in a more ſpecial Manner at *Jeruſalem*; elſe what can be meant by the Lord's chuſing that City again?

Chap. viii. 3. *Thus ſaith the Lord, I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the Midſt of Jeruſalem: And Jeruſalem ſhall be called a City of Truth, and the Mountain of the Lord of Hoſts, the holy Mountain.*—This can't be the City that was re-edified under the *Perſian* Monarchy and deſtroyed by the *Romans*.

V. 4. *There ſhall yet Old Men and Old Women dwell in the Streets of Jeruſalem, and every Man with*

with his Staff in his Hand for very Age. 5. *And the Streets of the City shall be full of Boys and Girls, playing in the Streets thereof.*—The *Jews* were not blessed with Longævity after their Return from the *Babylonish* Captivity; therefore this Promise respects the *new Jerusalem* which we should yet expect. It may also serve to invalidate the Notion of those who contend for *Christ*'s reigning visibly, or corporally present, in this future *Jerusalem*, with the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles and other Saints. This new City is to be inhabited by mortal Men, else the Circumstance of walking with Staves, to support old Age, would not be mentioned; and that such Men are to be the Inhabitants thereof, is made still plainer by the Boys and Girls playing in the Streets. Procreation, then, still goes on as usual; but after the Resurrection, as our blessed *Saviour* tells us, Men do not marry: Consequently, the *new Jerusalem* is not to be the Residence of the *raised Saints* during the *Millenium*. Some learned Commentators are indeed willing to admit of the personal Appearance of *Christ* only for a *short* Time at the *Beginning* of the *Millenium*, as several Passages of Scripture seem to make for it: But as the Point is not clear to me, I will neither affirm nor deny it.

V. 20, 21, 22, *It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come People, and the Inhabitants of many Cities. And the Inhabitants of one City shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of Hosts: I will go also. Yea, many People and strong Nations shall come to seek the Lord of Hosts*

Hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. This tallies so exactly with the 2d and 3d Verses of *Isaiah*'s second Chapter, that it is impossible to fall into a Mistake concerning the Meaning of the *Mountain* of the *Lord's House.*

Zechariah also saith, Chap. xii. 6. *Jerusalem shall be inhabited again, in her own Place, even in Jerusalem.*—The most nefarious Caviller can't distort this Passage from its obvious and natural Sense; for if *Jerusalem* is not to be taken literally, it follows that *Zechariah* has put a Banter on the common Sense of Mankind, and laid a stumbling Block for the *Jews* in particular.

The same Prophet going on with the Scene that shall happen in the *last* Days, tells us, Chap. xiii. 2. *And it shall come to pass in that Day, saith the Lord of Hosts, that I will cut off the Names of the Idols out of the Land; and they shall no more be remembered.*—The same thing *Isaiah* tells us in the Chapter above mentioned: All Pictures are to be destroyed, and the Idols utterly abolished. The *Jews* indeed have long since cast off those Works of Vanity and Delusion; and 'tis to be presumed *Christians* will do the same in the latter Days.

Again, *Zechariah* saith, Chap. xiv. 8. *And it shall be in that Day, that living Waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them towards the former Sea, and half of them toward the hinder Sea: In Summer and in Winter shall it be.*—These living Waters are the Law and the Word of the Lord, which go forth from *Zion* and *Jerusalem,*

Jeruſalem, as *Iſaiah* ſaith: By Summer and Winter we may underſtand all Seaſons and all Occaſions. See this further illuſtrated in *Ezekiel* xlvii. 8. *Joel* iii. 18.

In fine, *Zechariah*, ſaith, v. 9. of the Chapter laſt mentioned, *And the Lord ſhall be King over all the Earth: In that Day ſhall there be* ONE *Lord, and his Name* ONE.—This agrees with *Iſaiah*'s ſecond Chapter, where we are told, that *the lofty Looks of Man ſhall be humbled, and the Haughtineſs of Men ſhall be bowed down, and the Lord alone ſhall be exalted in that Day.* i. e. worſhipped in Spirit and in Truth by all Nations, in conſequence of his ariſing to ſhake terribly the Earth, and deſtroying Idolatry both Root and Branch.

I have dwelt the longer on your firſt Quotation from *Iſaiah* to prove the Church's perpetual Viſibility, that I may be more conciſe on the other Texts, whereby you would induce us to look for that Viſibility at *Rome*, and in the Nations joined in Communion with her.

Your next Proof is from the ſame Prophet, Chap. lxii. 6. '*I have ſet Watchmen upon thy* '*Walls, O Jeruſalem, which ſhall never hold* '*their peace Day nor Night.*'—According to your Conſtruction of this Paſſage, the Church of *Chriſt*, by which we muſt always underſtand your Church, has never wanted, nor ever will want, a perpetual Succeſſion of Orthodox Paſtors and Teachers. For my part, I cannot find ſo much as one ſingle Verſe in this Chapter of *Iſaiah*, that may with the leaſt Colour of

Reaſon

Reaſon, be applied in favour of the Biſhop of *Rome* and the Nations in Communion with him; but the whole, in my humble Opinion, muſt be underſtood of ſome *future* State of the *Meſſiah*'s Kingdom, of which, 'tis plain, *Jeruſalem* is to be the Head: Otherwiſe it will be impoſſible to reconcile this Prophecy with the Rules of Common Senſe and Propriety of Speech, which I preſume the inſpired Penmen never intended to deviate from, as their Writings were deſigned for the Inſtruction of the Unlearned, as well as the Learned, in all Ages and Nations; though I allow that, for wiſe Ends of Providence, the Holy Ghoſt has directed them to wrap up certain Predictions in Metaphors and Emblems; as may be inſtanced in the *Apocalypſe*, which abounds with them more than any other Book, for a Reaſon which your Divines readily enough perceive, when they ſet themſelves to comment upon it.

The Queſtion is, what are we to underſtand by *Jeruſalem* in the Paſſage juſt quoted? Upon a careful Examination of the Context, we cannot but declare for the literal Senſe; becauſe we find a Promiſe made to a *forſaken*, *deſolate* Land, or City, to receive her into Favour again, to *marry her*, to *make her a Praiſe in the Earth, and a Crown of Glory in the Hands of the Lord.* Now, Sir, I preſume you will hardly allow that *Rome*, or your Church, has ever been caſt off and left deſolate, and needs to be reſtored; for this would be a Contradiction to your own Principles: Therefore, I muſt take Leave to apply this Promiſe to the *Jewiſh* People and the Land of *Judea*, where the Goſpel will be re-

ſtored

ſtored in the latter Days, and from thence diffuſed all over the Earth, as hath been already ſhewn. And, for your farther Satisfaction, pleaſe to take this Obſervation, which you will find of great Uſe, whenever you think fit to exerciſe your Talents again in expounding and applying Prophecies, *viz.* That where the *literal* Senſe preſents us with no *Abſurdity*, or is not *impoſſible* in the Nature of Things, nor *repugnant* to any other expreſs, plain Declaration in Holy Writ, we ought to adopt that Senſe, and not run the Riſque of bewildering ourſelves with ſuch forced Conſtructions and allegorical Interpretations, as Men of a fertile Invention may put upon the plaineſt Paſſages in Scripture, when Intereſt or Prejudice engages them to maintain any favourite Syſtem.

After urging *Matth.* v. 14. which I paſs by without Notice, for the Reaſon given in the Beginning of my Work, you bring us again to *Iſaiah*, Chap. lx. 11. '*Thy Gates ſhall be open* '*continually, they ſhall not be ſhut Day nor Night*, '*that Men may bring unto thee the Forces of the* '*Gentiles, and that their Kings may be brought.*' But here, I think, you ſpeed no better than you have already done by meddling with this Prophet, as any unprejudiced Man may perceive by the following Verſes of the ſame Chapter, which I ſhall briefly expound.

10. *And the Sons of Strangers ſhall build up thy Walls, and their Kings ſhall miniſter unto thee: For in my Wrath I ſmote thee, but in my Favour have I had Mercy on thee.*—What Place can this be, but *Jeruſalem*, which God deſtroyed in his

Wrath? This ruined City is to be rebuilt, not by the Seed of *Jacob*, but by ſome *Chriſtian* Potentates: Whence it ſeems that the *Jews*, after their Reſtoration, may not be *ſole* Proprietors of *Jeruſalem* and the Land of *Canaan*.

14. *The Sons alſo of them that afflicted thee, ſhall come bending unto thee; and all they that deſpiſed thee ſhall bow themſelves down at the Soles of thy Feet; and they ſhall call thee the City of the Lord, the Zion of the holy one of* Iſrael.—Theſe I take to be the *Roman* and *Mahometan* Powers, who have in their Turns ſucceſſively deſtroyed and kept deſolate the Land of *Canaan*; and theſe ſhall repent and pay Homage to *Jeruſalem* in her future glorious State.

15. *Whereas thou haſt been forſaken and hated, ſo that no Man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal Excellency, a Joy of many Generations.*—Plainly importing the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, the Rejection of the *Jews*, and their future Adoption.

18. *Violence ſhall no more be heard in thy Land, Waſting nor Deſtruction within thy Borders; but thou ſhalt call thy Walls Salvation, and thy Gates Praiſe.*—If this Verſe and all the reſt of the Chapter is to be underſtood, in a large Senſe, of the *Chriſtian* Church in general, I would fain know in what Age and in what Countries we muſt look for this peaceable, equitable, holy State which *Iſaiah* is deſcribing. Shall we go as high up as the Reign of *Conſtantine*, the firſt Chriſtian Emperor? Alas! 'tis not to be found then, nor in the Reigns of his Children and their Succeſſors. Shall we ſeek it in the half

Chriſtian, half barbarian *Gothic* States? No; there is nothing to be ſeen amongſt them but Monkery, Superſtition, groſs Idolatry, Violence and Bloodſhed. Is it then to be found in our Days? Chriſtendom is indeed leſs barbarous and ignorant than formerly; but God alone knows how much Ground the Devil may have loſt or gained by the Change: To me it ſeems immaterial whether Men work out their Perdition rudely or politely. However, an Increaſe of Knowledge is a great Step towards introducing the glorious Scene exhibited in this Chapter of *Iſaiah*, which I apprehend is coincident with the *binding* of *Satan*, *Revel.* xx. in whatever Senſe we may take it; for till the Temptor is reſtrained and confined, the World cannot be freed from Violence, Waſting and Deſtruction, which *Jeruſalem* has felt more ſeverely than any other Place, and from which, 'tis plain, ſhe in particular is to be delivered in the latter Days, and made the Head of the *Meſſiah*'s Kingdom on Earth. And now, Sir, do you think there is any thing abſurd or ſeemingly impoſſible in all this? You cannot but know that the Scripture abounds with Promiſes of Favours and Bleſſings to *Jeruſalem*, moſt of which we are certain, from paſt Events, and the preſent Condition of that City and circumjacent Territory, have not yet been performed: But I believe you would be hard put to it to produce from all the Sacred Writings ſo much as *one* plain, expreſs Promiſe of good Things to *Rome*. I will not affirm that, on the contrary, there are dreadful Judgments denounced againſt her; becauſe you would readily reply, that I take that for granted which is contro-

verted; *Babylon*, in St. *John*'s Revelation, not ſignifying *Rome* in her Chriſtian State, but ſomething elſe, which, however, your infallible Expoſitors can make neither Head nor Tail of.

After having thus unadviſedly ſtumbled upon *Iſaiah*'s 60th Chapter, you urge, for the perpetual Viſibility of the *Romiſh* Church, *Geneſis* xxii. 18. '*In thy Seed* (ſays God Almighty to 'Abraham) *ſhall all the Nations of the Earth be* '*bleſſed.*'—Very rightly brought in for the glorious Viſibility of *Chriſt*'s Church; but, unluckily for your Cauſe, it proves too much. The Word *all*, in its common Uſe and Acceptation, implies at leaſt a *Majority:* But hardly a *fifth* Part of the Globe has yet enjoy'd the Benefit of the Promiſe made to *Abraham.* Therefore, as God's Word does not go forth in vain, the *full* Performance of this Promiſe is yet to come.

Neither are you more lucky in producing the 8th Verſe of the ſecond Pſalm to prop up your decaying Church: '*Aſk of me*; *and I ſhall* '*give thee the Heathen for thine Inheritance*, *and* '*the uttermoſt Parts of the Earth for thy Poſ-* '*ſeſſion.*'—When *David* wrote this, the People of God were one little Nation, diſtinct and ſeparated from all the reſt of the World, who are called the Heathen in the Scripture Stile: Now, leſt it ſhould be thought, that a *few* Kingdoms ſubmitting to the *Meſſiah* was all that is meant by *giving him the Heathen for his Inheritance*, the Royal Prophet emphatically adds, the *uttermoſt Parts of the Earth;* Which agrees with

with the Idea *Daniel* gives us of *Christ*'s Kingdom in his ſecond and ſeventh Chapters. Why this Prophecy has not yet been fulfilled, we may partly gather from the ſecond and third Verſes of this Pſalm; *The Kings of the Earth ſet themſelves, and the Rulers take Counſel together, againſt the Lord, and againſt his Anointed, ſaying, Let us break their Bands aſunder, and caſt away their Cords from us.* This ſeems to tally pretty well with what is ſaid in the *Apocalypſe*, of the Kings of the Earth giving their Power and Authority to the *Beaſt*, and committing *Fornication* with the *myſtical Babylon*, the *Mother of Harlots*; which, whether you will allow her to be *Rome* or not, muſt certainly be ſome Place or Country that profeſſes Chriſtianity in ſome Shape or other; for where there is no *Idolatry* mixed with the Worſhip of God, there cannot be ſaid to be any *ſpiritual Fornication*; this Crime implying the Breach of a Covenant entered into with *God* to worſhip him *alone.*

The next Authority you produce is the 27th Verſe of the 22d Pſalm: '*All the Ends of the* '*World ſhall remember and turn unto the Lord,* '*and all the Kindreds of the Nations ſhall wor-* '*ſhip before thee.*'—Will they all acknowledge *Rome* to be the Seat of *Chriſt*'s Vicar, and join in Communion with her; or have they all done it already? The latter Part of the Queſtion even you yourſelf muſt reſolve in the Negative, and the former I take Leave flatly to deny; becauſe that in the Prophecies of the Church's great Splendor and Amplitude, there is generally ſomething dropt about the Extirpation of *Idolatry:*

latry: The former cannot take place till the total Abolition of the latter. But you'll ſay this does not concern your Church, which is quite free from Idolatry; and ſo I muſt let it paſs, as this is not a proper Place to enter into a Controverſy about it.

Then you refer us again to *Iſaiah*, Chap. xlix. 6. '*It is a light Thing that thou ſhouldſt be* '*my Servant to raiſe up the Tribes of* Jacob— '— —*I will alſo give thee for a Light to the* '*Gentiles, that thou mayeſt be my Salvation unto* '*the End of the Earth.*'——Why you left out theſe Words in the Middle of the Verſe, *and to reſtore the preſerved of* Iſrael, I can no other Way account for, than by ſuppoſing it proceeded from a Shyneſs to mention any thing that ſquints at the Reſtauration or Converſion of the *Jews*, leſt it ſhould make your Readers conclude, that theſe glorious Promiſes to the Church of *Chriſt* are to have their *full* Accomplishment at or about the Time of the Calling of the *Jews*; and conſequently, that the *Roman* Church is too haſty or too preſumptuous in arrogating them to herſelf.

To ſhew what bungling Work the greateſt Doctors are capable of making, when they don't regard the Context, I ſubjoin a few more Verſes of *Iſaiah*'s 49th Chapter.

14. *But* Zion ſaid, *The Lord hath forſaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.*

15. *Can a Woman forget her ſucking Child, that ſhe ſhould not have Compaſſion on the Son of her*

her Womb ? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.

16. *Behold, I have graven thee on the Palms of my Hands, thy Walls are continually before me.*

19. *For thy waſte and thy deſolate Places, and the Land of thy Deſtruction ſhall even now be too narrow by Reaſon of the Inhabitants, and they that ſwallowed thee up ſhall be far away.*—By which Paſſages, as well as by the whole Scope of the Chapter, we plainly perceive a ſpecial Promiſe of great Bleſſings to ſome particular Land or People ; and if this be not the carnal Seed of *Iſrael* and the Land of *Judea*, it is impoſſible to make Senſe of the Prophecy. Does not this laſt Verſe in particular confirm what the ſame Prophet ſays, in his ſecond Chapter, of all Nations reſorting to *Jeruſalem ?* If nothing more was meant here, than that the *Gentiles* ſhould embrace the Goſpel, with what Propriety could the Prophet ſay, that their *waſte* and *deſolate* Places, the Land of their *Deſtruction*, ſhould be too narrow for the Inhabitants ? Not that we are to ſuppoſe all Nations will take up their Reſt in the Land of *Iſrael*, after the Reſtoration of the Goſpel there, but that there will be a great Concourſe of People from all Parts, and that the Holy Land and neighbouring Countries will be more populous than other Parts of the Globe. I need ſay no more on this Head. Let every one read the whole Chapter attentively, and judge whether it agrees with the paſt or preſent State of the World in general, or is applicable to the

Roman

Roman Church in particular. The *Harlot* may indeed usurp the Prerogatives and deck herself with the Ornaments of the *Bride :* But let her think of the dreadful Sentence pronounced against her that saith in her Heart, *I sit a Queen, and am no Widow, and shall see no Sorrow.* Revel. xviii. 7.

The next Thing I am to consider is the 1st, 2d and 3d Verses of *Isaiah*'s 54th Chapter, which is another of your Proofs of the Church's perpetual Visibility. ' *Sing, O Barren, thou* ' *that dist not bear, break forth into singing, and* ' *cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with* ' *Child ; for more are the Children of the desolate* ' *than the Children of the married Wife. Enlarge* ' *the Place of thy Tents, and let them stretch* ' *forth the Curtains of thine Habitations : Spare* ' *not, lengthen thy Cords and strengthen thy* ' *Stakes. For thou shalt break forth on the Right* ' *Hand and on the Left, and thy Seed shall inherit* ' *the Gentiles,* &c.' You should have added, *and make the desolate Cities to be inhabited.* The Design of this Omission, I think, is too glaring to be concealed or denied. Being sensible it might occur to some of your Readers, that the Land of *Judea* and *Jerusalem* have lain in a desolate Condition these many Ages, you slily skip over what plainly imports a Restauration of the *Jews* to that Land, and a glorious and more extensive Estate of *Christ*'s Church at, and for a long Time after, their Conversion.

But should we even allow this whole Chapter of *Isaiah* to be only a Description of the Glory of the Christian Church, abstracting from the

Conversion

Converſion and Reſtoration of the *Jews*, you would ſtill loſe your Point; it being impoſſible, without offering manifeſt Violence to the Text, to reconcile the Prophet's Expreſſions with the Hiſtory of that Church whereof *Rome* has been the Head upwards of a thouſand Years, or 1700 as her Advocates maintain.

Iſaiah ſays v. 13, 14. *And all thy Children ſhall be taught of the Lord, and great ſhall be the Peace of thy Children. In Righteouſneſs ſhalt thou be eſtabliſhed: Thou ſhalt be far from Oppreſſion, for thou ſhalt not fear; and from Terror, for it ſhall not come near thee.* Now, Sir, pleaſe to tell us in what Century this comfortable Prediction has been fulfilled; or elſe ſhew that it is not inconſiſtent with the Veracity of an inſpired Writer to exceed in romantick Flights and Hyperboles the moſt licentious Poets. If you fix your Foot in the three or four firſt Centuries, which are allowed to be the pureſt Ages of the Church, we may indeed find *Righteouſneſs* enough; but, at the ſame Time, we ſee *Oppreſſion* abounding and her Children in *perpetual Fear* and *Terror*. If we come down lower, and confine ourſelves within the Pale of that Church which is in Communion with and dependant on *Rome*, then ſhall we be at a Loſs to know how *all her Children are taught of the Lord*, ſince ſo few of them ever read or hear his Word.—But I aſk your Pardon for this haſty Reflection: I did not conſider that the Paſtors of your Church are infallible, and whatever they teach muſt conſequently be as true and as edifying as the Scriptures.

Another Text which you think will ſerve to prove the conſtant Viſibility of your Church, is *Malachi* i. 11. '*From the Riſing of the Sun* '*even to the going down of the ſame, my Name* '*ſhall be great among the Gentiles.*'—I am ſenſible you'll have Cauſe to grow very angry, if I never grant you any thing: Therefore, to put you in good Humour for half a Minute, I let this Text paſs (leaving the Reader to interpret it with the Help of what has been ſaid already) becauſe you might ſilence me with the *planting* of *Popery* in ſome of the remoteſt Parts of the *Eaſt* and *Weſt* within theſe two or three laſt Centuries.

Having gone thus far, you ſeem to think yourſelf invulnerable, and with an Air of Triumph proceed as follows:

'But nothing can be more deciſive for the 'perpetual Viſibility of the Church of *Chriſt*, 'than two illuſtrious Teſtimonies of the Pro-'phet *Jeremiah*, the one in the 31ſt Chapter, 'the other in the 33d.'—*N. B.* I don't diſpute that Viſibility, in ſome Degree, in every Age ſince *Chriſt* was upon Earth: My chief Buſineſs is to ſhew that you do not underſtand the Prophecies of the Old Teſtament; and that if all the Doctors of your Church underſtand them no better, their Pretenſions to Modeſty and Candor muſt ſtand on the ſame Foundation as their Infallibility.

'In the 31ſt Chapter (ſay you) v. 31, *&c.* 'He gives us the following Account of the 'eſtabliſhing of the new Law.' [Here I muſt again

again remind you, that the *Jewiſh* Prophets, when they ſpeak of this Eſtabliſhment, generally have an Eye to that Period of Time when their own Nation is to partake of the Bleſſings of the new Covenant, and ſo deſcribe the Church in her moſt flouriſhing and glorious State.] '*Behold the Days come, ſaith the Lord, that I* '*will make a new Covenant with the Houſe of* '*Iſrael and with the Houſe of Judah :*'—If the Prophet does not mean all the twelve Tribes, wherefoever they may be diſperſed, I am at a Loſs to tell why he ſpeaks thus diſtinctly of the Houſe of *Iſrael* and the Houſe of *Judah :* Or, if it ſeem better to you, you may thereby underſtand the Union of the *Jews* with the *Gentiles*, though it will be but a lame Expoſition. But let us follow you a Step farther, and we ſhall find you ſtumbling again.

'*Not according to the Covenant that I made* '*with their Fathers*, &c.' Here you break off the Verſe, but, with your Leave, I muſt go through with it, becauſe it is very eſſential to the Point in Diſpute; *In the Day that I took them by the Hand, to bring them out of the Land of Egypt, which my Covenant they brake, although I was an Huſband unto them, ſaith the Lord.* A Man muſt be very ignorant or extremely dull, not to perceive your drift in curtailing this Paſſage: It too plainly ſignifies the *Jewiſh* People; and ſo you were under a Neceſſity to ſkip over the moſt material Part of it, even the Circumſtance of being brought out of *Egypt*. But ſuppoſing we muſt take it in the Senſe which makes for your Purpoſe, i. e. the *ſpiritual* Seed of *Iſrael*, excluſively of the *carnal*; it will then

 follow,

follow, that the *Christians* have broken the Covenant which was made for *them* with the Chil- of *Israel* when God led the *latter* out of the Land of *Egypt*; for I hope you cannot be so extravagant as to maintain, that the *Heathen* could break a Covenant that was not made with them: And how far the *Romish* Church in particular may be affected by such a Conclusion, I leave to be determined by every Man that understands the full Force and Meaning of the *first and second Commandments*.

The 33d Verse you give entire, *viz.* '*But* '*this shall be the Covenant that I will make with* '*the House of Israel, After those Days, saith the* '*Lord, I will put my Law in their inward Parts,* '*and write it in their Hearts, and will be their* '*God, and they shall be my People.*'—But, for the Reasons just assigned, you might as well have curtailed this Passage also, or rather omitted it entirely; the Justice of which Remark is farther evinced by the 34th Verse, which you likewise quote, except these Words at the End of it, *for I will forgive their Iniquity, and I will remember their Sin no more.* The Design of this Omission is so apparent, that I need not spend much Time in exposing it. God says here by the Mouth of *Jeremiah*, *they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them*; which, I think, implies nothing less than a general Conversion of all the Tribes of *Israel*, taking the Words in the narrowest Sense, which is the literal and natural Construction, as is evident by the Context: But in a larger Sense, which, however, is a forced Construction, they may imply a general

neral *Reformation* of Chriſtendom, and the Converſion of all thoſe Nations that are involved in Mahometan Deluſions or immerſed in Pagan Darkneſs. Now, if in Contempt of common Senſe and Propriety of Speech, this Promiſe muſt be reſtrained, for its full Performance, to the *ſpiritual* Seed of *Iſrael* only, *i. e.* ſuch of the *Gentile* Nations as have from Time to Time embraced the Goſpel, it will be impoſſible to fix upon any Epoch in which it can be ſaid to have been in any tolerable Degree fulfilled; unleſs, to ſolve the Difficulty, we run into this childiſh Way of arguing, *viz.* That all thoſe who in any Age or Nation did receive the Goſpel and live up to it, did all know the Lord from the leaſt to the greateſt of them; or, in other Words, that every individual good Chriſtian was a good Chriſtian. It would be very ſtrange if the Houſe of *Iſrael* and the Houſe of *Judah*, in the Prophecies of the *Old Teſtament*, ſhould be taken for the *Italians*, *Germans*, *French*, *Spaniards*, &c. At this Rate of interpreting, every Commentator may make the *Jews Gentiles*, and the *Gentiles Jews*, according as it ſerves his Turn. But being brimful of Confidence in your Infallibility, you could not be aware of any ſuch Objections, and ſo you lead on your Readers through the 35th, 36th and 37th Verſes of the ſame Chapter; for which I am very much obliged to you, as you have thereby given me a farther Advantage over you. In the 36th Verſe we perceive that the Seed of *Iſrael* ſhould *ceaſe* from being a *Nation*, (that is, if I take it right, a collective independant Body, as they were of old) but not *for ever*: In Confirmation

of

of which it follows in the next Verſe, that *God will not caſt them all off, for all that they have done.* Being perhaps ſenſible that the reſt of the Chapter would quite undo all your Work, you wind up your Bottom with the 37th Verſe, and are poſitive, ‘ that by the Seed of *Iſrael* in ‘ this Place, can be meant no other than the ‘ *ſpiritual* Seed of *Iſrael*, the Church of *Chriſt*.’ But what ſays *Jeremiah* in the very next Verſe? He plainly tells us, that the City *(Jeruſalem)* ſhall be rebuilt, and concludes the Chapter with a Promiſe, that *it ſhall not be pluckt up, nor thrown down any more for ever.* Now it is evident that this Prophecy cannot be referred to the ſecond City and Temple which the *Jews* built after their Return from the *Babyloniſh* Captivity; becauſe they have ſince ceaſed from being a Nation, being ſcattered all over the Earth; and that ſame City and Temple have been utterly deſtroyed: Conſequently the Prophet muſt mean a *third* City, which is to be built, on the ſame Spot, under the *new* Covenant.

It is farther obſervable, that the 30th Chapter of *Jeremiah* is the ſame in Subſtance as the 31ſt, being a Kind of Prelude to it, and having a manifeſt Connection with it. The former ends thus: *Behold, the Whirlwind of the Lord goeth forth with Fury, a continuing Whirlwind, it ſhall fall with Pain on the Head of the Wicked. The fierce Anger of the Lord ſhall not return, until he have done it, and until he have performed the Intents of his Heart: In the latter Days ye ſhall conſider it.* And as the 31ſt Chapter begins with theſe Words, *At the ſame Time, ſaith*

the

the Lord, will I be the God of all the Families of Iſrael, *and they ſhall be my People*; we muſt conclude, that the Prophecies in theſe two Chapters, in their obvious, natural Senſe, are to be fulfilled in the *latter* Days; and that a Time of dreadful Confuſion, Deſolation and Woe in divers Nations, is to precede the Reſtoration and Converſion of the *Jews*, as may be gathered from the 7th Verſe of the 30th Chapter; *Alas, for that Day is great, ſo that none is like it: It is even the Time of* Jacob's *Trouble, but he ſhall be ſaved out of it.* See *Dan.* xii. 1. for a Confirmation of the ſame.

Due Attention being given to my Remarks on the 30th and 31ſt of *Jeremiah*, you'll allow it needleſs to follow you in the Authorities you produce from the 33d Chapter of the ſame Prophet in Behalf of your Church. What you quote from Dr. *Stillingfleet* and Mr. *Leſley* does not overthrow the main Point I am contending for, which is, That the glorious Deſcriptions of the *Meſſiah*'s Kingdom, in the Prophets of the Old Teſtament, muſt be referred to that Period of Time when both *Jews* and *Gentiles* ſhall be all united in one Faith, and under one Head, *Chriſt*; and cannot, without offering manifeſt Violence to the whole Stream of Prophecy, be applied to the paſt nor the preſent State of the World, either in *Spirituals* or *Temporals:* Which I could farther illuſtrate by a Cloud of other Scripture Paſſages; but wanting both Leiſure and Inclination to write a folio Volume, I chuſe to keep as cloſe to the Chapters, from which you extract your Proofs, as the Nature of the Controverſy will admit.

Your

Your third Preliminary being out of the Latitude I chuſe to ſail in, I paſs it by; as I likewiſe do the 4th and 5th Preliminaries, the Proofs of which are drawn from *human* Authorities. Neither ſhall I trouble my Head about your 6th Preliminary, ſeeing you have brought no Scripture Texts to ſupport it, but ſuch as may be urged by any Chriſtian Societies or Congregations that firmly believe themſelves to be the true Church of *Chriſt:* And as for the Writings of the *Fathers*, or any other *human* Compoſitions, antient or modern, I cannot make uſe of them in this Diſpute, for the Reaſons aſſigned at my ſetting out. The Circumſtances and Talents of the Bulk of Mankind do not admit of being burthened with ſuch a Heap of Authorities. If an Artiſan wants to make a careful and diligent Inquiry after the true Church, muſt he ſell his Tools to buy *Fathers*, *Schoolmen*, &c. and ſo ſtarve himſelf and Family before he can find her out? The Bible alone is ſufficient to guide any Man in this Inquiry; and if I can ſhew that you have blundered, or wilfully prevaricated, in the Uſe you make of the *Old Teſtament* to prove the Infallibility of the *Roman* Church, his own Senſe will tell him how much Credit he may give to ſuch Parts of your Book as I take no Notice of.

Your ſeventh Preliminary being alſo foreign to my Deſign, which is not to ſet up for judging who ſhall be ſaved, and who ſhall be damned, I diſmiſs it with recommending to your ſerious Conſideration theſe Words of our bleſſed Saviour; *If any Man hear my Words, and believe*

not, I judge him not : For I came not to judge the World, but to ſave the World. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my Words, hath one that judgeth him : The Word that I have ſpoken, the ſame ſhall judge him in the laſt Day. John xii. 47, 48. By which we may perceive, that every one is to be judged according to the Meaſure of Knowledge he has Opportunities of receiving, and the Uſe he makes of it; and that if the Word of Life does not reach his Ears, he is not to be judged by the ſame.

I come now to your Eighth Preliminary, which runs thus.

'All the Marks or Characters of the true 'Church of *Chriſt*, ſet down in Scripture and 'Fathers, agree to the Church in Communion 'with *Rome*, and none of them all to *Pro-* '*teſtants*.'

In order to prove this, you ply us again with Texts from *Iſaiah*, *viz.* Chap. xlix. 22, 23, liv. 3. lx. 3, 11, 12. which Places having been already taken Notice of, I have nothing farther to add here. Then, being puffed up with the lofty Deſcriptions of that ſublime Prophet, which you imagine to be all applicable to your Church, you run on in this Strain. —'It was the Church of *Chriſt* which, *Iſaiah* 'ii. and *Micah* iv. is called the *Mountain* of 'the *Houſe* of the *Lord*. It was this Church 'that was ſignified by the *Stone hew'd out the* '*Mountain without Hands*, Daniel ii. 34, 35. 'which *grew up into a great Mountain and filled*

'*the whole Earth*; which the Prophet inter-
'prets, v. 44, 45. of a *Kingdom that ſhould*
'*ſubdue all other Kingdoms, and ſtand for ever.*'
—Now, permit me to think, that that Society, of which the Biſhop of *Rome* is the viſible Head, and the Prince of Deluſion the inviſible one, (pardon the Expreſſion; if it be too coarſe in theſe polite Times, it was not deemed ſo formerly) cannot be that Church which *Iſaiah* and *Micah* ſay ſhall be exalted above the Hills, and give Laws and Inſtructions to all Nations; but, on the contrary, ſeems rather to be the People that *ſhall caſt their Idols to the Moles and to the Bats, to go into the Clefts of the Rocks, and into the Tops of the ragged Rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the Glory of his Majeſty, when he ariſeth to ſhake terribly the Earth.* As for the Application you make in this Place of *Daniel's* ſecond Chapter, though I have ſufficiently obviated it already, I may further obſerve, that there is not the leaſt Shadow of Reaſon for it, unleſs you inſiſt upon the bold Puſhes made by the *Roman* Pontiffs to bring Kings and Emperors under their Yoke as well in temporal as ſpiritual Mattters; and their vigorous Efforts to recover the *Holy Land* out of the Hands of the *Mahometans*; thus arrogantly attempting a Work reſerved for the Profeſſors of true Chriſtianity in the latter Days. But the ill Succeſs of thoſe Encroachments upon the Civil Powers, the horrible Scenes of Confuſion and Bloodſhed they were productive of in Chriſtendom, and the diſmal Cataſtrophe of all the Expeditions made to the Holy Land at the Inſtigation of the *Popes*, plainly demonſtrate by what Spirit they were actuated: The Fruit

was

was anſwerable to the Tree: They ſtrove againſt the Decrees of Heaven, ran counter to the Order of God and Nature, broke through all Principles of Equity and Humanity, and did proſper accordingly.

However, being reſolved to make thoſe Paſſages of *Iſaiah* and other Prophets fit your Church at any Rate, you proceed to enumerate the ſeveral Nations converted to *Popery* from the 5th to the 15th Century, and then give us a ſhort, puffy Account of the Succeſs of your Preachers, in theſe latter Ages, 'in reducing 'an infinite Multitude of Unbelievers to the 'Fold of *Chriſt*, the Catholic Church, in all 'Parts of the infidel World;' which, after all, we need not much wonder at, even though we ſhould allow that you don't exaggerate on this Head. The Bulk of Mankind being very prone to *Idolatry* (the Sin which, I believe, the *Old Serpent* chiefly ſets himſelf to propagate, as it is an Inlet to all other Corruptions) whatever Chriſtian Society will ſtoop to humour Pagans in this Article, by retaining *Images*, and allowing a *Plurality* of *Gods*, or Objects of religious Worſhip, cannot fail of making many Proſelytes: And this, in my Judgment, is the moſt natural Way of accounting for what Succeſs your Church may have had in thoſe Miſſions; ſince it is notorious that your itinerant Preachers neither can nor do pretend to the ſame Gifts as the Apoſtles and ſome of their Fellow-Labourers had: Yet you mightily boaſt of the Miracles wrought by ſome of your modern Apoſtles, which, I ſuppoſe, paſs among your Flock for as authentic as any recorded in

Holy Writ. But as for those modern Miracles, I hope one may call them in question without being an Infidel.

The next Characteristick whereby you think we may discover the *Romish* Church to be the true Church of *Christ*, is *Antiquity:* And here, among other Texts produced to no Purpose, you give us *Jeremiah* vi. 16. '*Thus saith the* '*Lord, stand ye in the Ways, and see, and ask for* '*the Old Paths, where is the good Way, and* '*walk therein, and ye shall find Rest for your* '*Souls.*'—Were it not for the Specimens you have already given of your excellent Knack at misapplying the Scripture, one could almost swear you only meant to banter us in quoting this Passage; *Jeremiah* being a very improper Authority to be produced in behalf of your Church. The constant Employment of this Prophet, the Burthen of his Song, as I may express it, was to dehort the *Jews* from the new Paths, *Idolatry*, which I perceive they were then as obstinately and stupidly determined to walk in, as the most ignorant and stiff-neck'd of your Communion can possibly be. However foolish or enthusiastical it may seem to you and others, I cannot help observing, that *Jeremiah* and all the Prophets must have been (if your Church is in the Right) meer Bunglers in Divinity, perfect Dunces in Logic, that did not understand the pretty Art of reconciling the *Commandments* of *God* with the *Inventions* of *Men:* For, without mincing the Matter, or making use of any thing like School-Distinctions and Quibbles, those inspired Writers tell us, that to set up any *Images*, or to pay any *religious*

ligious Worſhip to the *Creature*, is *a forſaking of the Creator, and caſting him behind our Back.* Alas! what Pity it is that they were Strangers to theſe ſo ſerviceable Terms, *Latria*, *Doulia*, *relative Honour*, &c.—Here, Sir, I muſt beſpeak your Patience, while I tranſcribe a few Paſſages of *Jeremiah* to ſupport theſe Reflections.

Chap. ii. 26. *As the Thief is aſhamed when he is found, ſo is the Houſe of* Iſrael *aſhamed; they, their Kings, their Princes, and their Prieſts, and their Prophets,*

27. *Saying to a Stock, Thou art my Father, and to a Stone, Thou haſt brought me forth: For they have turned their Back unto me, and not their Face: But in the Time of their Trouble they will ſay, Ariſe, and ſave us.*

28. *But where are thy Gods that thou haſt made thee? Let them ariſe, if they can ſave thee in the Time of thy Trouble: For according to the Number of thy Cities are thy Gods, O Judah.*

Chap. viii. 8. *How do you ſay, We are wiſe, and the Law of the Lord is with us? Lo, certainly in vain made he it, the Pen of the Scribes is in vain.*

If, according to your arbitrary Way of interpreting Scripture, the Houſe of *Iſrael* is to be taken for the Nations that conſtitute your Church, and *Mount Zion* and *Jeruſalem* muſt ſtand for *Rome*, when the Text may convey any Ideas advantageous to your Cauſe, how are we

to

to apply these Passages? You see how the Prophet charges his Nation with the most stupid Act of *Idolatry* Men can be capable of, and how wise those Idolaters were in their own Conceit! From whence I conjecture, that the *Jewish* Doctors in those Days were not at a Loss for sophistical Arguments to fling in the Teeth of the Lord's Prophets, in Vindication of their idolatrous Practices; it being otherwise impossible, at least for me, to conceive, how the Kings, the Princes, the Priests, the Scribes or Expounders of the Law, and the whole Nation, could persist in such Errors and Abominations as the Prophets so vehemently declaimed against, (and this too after they had partly seen and felt the Judgments denounced against Idolaters) unless they had had some Sort of Excuses, something like a Shadow of Reasoning, to alledge for the *Lawfulness*, or at least the *Inoffensiveness*, of those Practices: Nor do I doubt but that if their Reasons had been recorded and handed down to us, there would have appeared no material Difference between them and the Arguments urged by modern Doctors in Defence of *Image-worship* and *Invocation* of *Saints* and *Angels*.—The Rant or Flourish with which you close your Section of *Antiquity*, is not much amiss, considering it drops from the Pen of a Pastor of an infallible Church. 'Our Religion, you say, is the old Religion. 'Tis the 'old Religion of *England*; the very Walls can 'witness it. 'Tis the old Religion of all 'Christendom; all Kind of Monuments attest 'it; our very Enemies cannot deny it. *Protestancy* came into the World 1500 Years after '*Christ*; therefore it came into the World 1500 'Years

'Years too late to be the Religion of *Christ*.' —But pray, Doctor, what is to be proved by this puffy Stuff? Truly, nothing at all for your Purpose. You may indeed prove by the Walls and Monuments of *Rome* and other Places, that *Paganism* was the *old* Religion of those Countries: But would any well-informed Christian infer from thence (tho' it would be a conclusive Argument with an Idolater) that Paganism is the true Religion? Upon the same Grounds the *Jewish* Doctors in *Jeremiah*'s Time might have argued, that their Way of worshipping God being older than that which *Moses* taught their Fathers, it must therefore be right: And so, at this Rate, Men of corrupt Hearts may explain away the clearest Precepts in Holy Writ.

The fourth Section of the eighth Preliminary, treating of *Apostolical Succession*, which is the fourth Mark whereby you discover the Church of *Rome* to be the Church of *Christ*, I shall say but little to. According to my Conceptions, the *Successors* of the Apostles are those that teach the same Doctrines which the Apostles taught, and do Honour to their Profession by their Morals; and whether their Numbers be great or small, spread all over the World, or confined to the narrow Limits of one Nation; whether they bear Rule in the Earth, or sit mourning in the Wilderness, waiting for a Deliverance, they alone constitute the true Church of *Christ*. In this Inquiry let every Man that has but little Leisure take the Bible for his Guide: This will tell him that worshipping *Images*, and setting up more than one Mediator between

between God and Man, is *Idolatry*; that an arbitrary, perſecuting Spirit, is of the Devil, who is ſtiled a Murderer from the Beginning. But if this does not ſatisfy him, let him, if he has Time and Money to ſpare, dip into Hiſtory, and read the Lives of the *Popes* in particular; and then ſee, in a long Liſt of about two hundred and fifty Biſhops of *Rome*, how many *Succeſſors* of the *Apoſtles* he can pick out of it.

The remaining Sections of this your eighth and laſt Preliminary, I ſkip over, my chief Buſineſs being only with ſuch of your Scripture Proofs as I apprehend are leaſt underſtood; and ſo I take in Hand the ſecond Section in the Body of your Work, the Title of which is,

'That the Church of *Chriſt*, in her Councils
'and Paſtors, is the Judge of all Controverſies
'of Religion, and that all Chriſtians are obliged
'to acquieſce to her Deciſions.'

This I may partly grant, and yet without giving you any Advantage over me: For, upon the Principles of your Divines, it is requiſite, in order to render a general Council infallible, that the Members of it meet together *duly qualified*, and *rightly prepared*, for interpreting the Scripture in any controverted Point; and then there is no Doubt but that the *Holy Ghoſt* aſſiſts thoſe who diligently and ſincerely ſeek him in Purity of Heart: As, on the other Hand, the Spirit of Error, the *Father* of *Lies*, never fails to lead Men aſtray that are actuated on thoſe ſolemn and weighty Occaſions, by worldly, carnal Motives, as Pride, Ambition, Covetouſneſs,

neſs, *&c.* To mention no other than your laſt *general Council*, can any Man of Common Senſe believe that the *Holy Ghoſt* had any Direction or Influence at *Trent?* If he had, the Members of that Council muſt have been very dull or obdurate, to ſpend ſo many Years in deciding Matters which an Aſſembly of wiſe, honeſt Men might have determined in as few Weeks.——However, to make good your Propoſition, you direct us, in the firſt Place, to the ſecond Epiſtle of *Peter*, Chap. iii. 16. which I thus expound for you, tho', purſuant to my Plan, I ought to paſs it by, as it belongs to the *New Teſtament:* Seeing then that the Scriptures are ſo hard to be underſtood, and that St. *Peter*, whoſe Succeſſor the Biſhop of *Rome* is, could ſpy out *dark* Paſſages in St. *Paul*'s Epiſtles; we muſt therefore rely *entirely* on the Pope and the Biſhops in Communion with him, for the Interpretation of the Bible. The other Texts offered in Support of this Section I may alſo paſs over unnoticed, as they are not more to your Purpoſe than that from St. *Peter*, and may be urged by any Society reſolved to exerciſe *Dominion* over People's Faith: And ſo I haſten to your third Section, the Head or Title of which runs thus:

'That the Church of *Chriſt*, which, as we 'have ſeen in the foregoing Section, is by di-'vine Appointment the Judge of all our Con-'troverſies of Religion, is by divine Promiſe 'infallible in the Exerciſe of this Judgment.'

The Church of *Chriſt*, as I take it, muſt be the whole Body of the Faithful, no matter

where ſituated, and not the *Clergy* only; and, as ſuch, is undoubtedly directed by the Spirit of God; yet *all* the Faithful cannot be Judges of Controverſies, tho' they are ſufficiently qualified to judge of what is neceſſary for Salvation; nor do we find by Experience, that the moſt learned and pious Men are more exempt from Errors in religious Speculations than in other Things. However, if the Divines of your Church could but forbear dipping into the prophetical Writings for Proofs of her Infallibility, one might be more apt to think her infallible, as a Fool, by holding his Tongue, may ſometimes be taken for a wiſe Man. But let us ſee how you make out the *Roman* Church's Claim to this unerring Judgment in Controverſies of Religion.

Your firſt Proof is taken from *Iſaiah*'s 59th Chapter, V. 20, 21. '*The Redeemer ſhall come* '*to* Zion, *and to them that turn from Tranſ-* '*greſſion in* Jacob, *ſaith the Lord: As for me,* '*this is my Covenant with them, ſaith the Lord;* '*my Spirit that is upon thee, and my Words* '*which I have put in thy Mouth, ſhall not depart* '*out of thy Mouth, nor out of the Mouth of thy* '*Seed, nor out of the Mouth of thy Seed's Seed,* '*ſaith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.*'— Well enough urged, in one Senſe, for the perpetual abiding of the *Holy Ghoſt* with the Faithful or the Church of *Chriſt*, yet no Proof that *Rome* has all along had, and ſtill has the Spirit of Truth. But in order to come at the true Senſe of theſe two Verſes, we ſhould carefully peruſe the whole Chapter, without the leaſt Prejudice for or againſt any Church now extant;

tant; and then we may perceive the Prophet complains of an univerſal Depravity and Departure from Truth and Righteouſneſs: At V. 16, 17, 18. there being no Man left to ſet Things to Rights, we ſee God ariſing to take Vengeance on all his Enemies; the Conſequence of which, as appears by the next Verſe, is, that the Lord ſhall be feared from one End of the Earth unto the other; which has never yet been the Caſe with this World, or elſe all Hiſtories muſt be falſe. Then, upon the overthrow of *the Enemy that ſhall come in like a Flood*, follows the Converſion of the *Jews*, who are enlighten'd by the *Spirit* of God, and have a Promiſe of his continuing with them from thenceforth for ever. This is farther illuſtrated by the next Chapter of *Iſaiah*, which ſets forth the Glory and great Extent of the *Meſſiah*'s Kingdom, upon the Calling in of the *Jews*, and *Jeruſalem*'s becoming the Head of his Church. What that *Enemy*, mentioned in the 19th Verſe of Chap. 59, may be, I will not take upon me to determine; but I ſuppoſe that the Goſpel cannot be reſtored at *Jeruſalem*, nor the *Jews* ſettled again in the Land of *Canaan*, 'till the *Ottoman* Power be broken: Nor is it likely that the Race of *Iſrael* will embrace Chriſtianity, 'till they ſee Chriſtendom purged from *Idolatry*, and Chriſtians at Unity among themſelves. And how *Idolatry* may be totally eradicated, 'till that particular Place, which has been the chief Promoter and main Support of it, is deſtroyed, I cannot well comprehend; becauſe St. *John* is very clear in regard to the Deſtruction of a *great Whore that ſitteth upon many Waters, a great City that reigneth over the*

the Kings of the Earth. See *Revel.* xvii. and xviii.

As for the Notion on which you lay ſo much Streſs, Page 83, and are pleaſed to call the common Notion of Chriſtians, *viz.* 'that the 'Converſion of the *Jews* ſhall not be till near 'the End of the World,' I prove the Fallacy of it as follows.

In the firſt Place I refer you to the three laſt Verſes of *Jeremiah*'s 31ſt Chapter, where the Prophet, after ſpeaking of the Eſtabliſhment of the *new* Covenant with the *Jewiſh* Nation in particular, foretells the rebuilding of *Jeruſalem*, and concludes with this ſpecial Promiſe, *It ſhall not be pluckt up nor thrown down any more for ever.* Hence it is evident there muſt be a long Space of Time between this Event and the End of the World.

For a ſecond Proof that your common Notion above mentioned is falſe and ridiculous, pleaſe to conſult the 65th Chapter of *Iſaiah*, from v. 16 to the End, which, I think, puts it quite out of Diſpute that the *Jews* ſhall be grafted into the Chriſtian Church long before the End of the World. For the Benefit of your Flock, who labour under a Famine of the Word of God, I tranſcribe a few Paſſages of that Chapter, annexing a brief Expoſition, in the Light the Matter appears to me, being ever ready to correct my Notions upon Conviction of their being erroneous.

17. *For behold, I create new Heavens, and a new Earth: And the former ſhall not be remember'd, nor come into Mind.*—The State of this World ſhall be ſo altered, that, figuratively ſpeaking, it may be called a new Creation. By Heaven and Earth the *Jewiſh* Prophets commonly mean only the World in which we live; at leaſt the Context urges us to take it here in this Senſe: In confirmation of which I may produce the *Pſalmiſt*, who ſaith, that God ſhall ſend forth his Spirit to renew the Face of the Earth.

18. *But be you glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: For behold, I create Jeruſalem a Rejoicing, and her People a Joy.*—Whether you take this *Jeruſalem* for the whole Chriſtian Church, or only for a *new* City built on the ſame Spot where the *Old* one ſtood, is not material to the main Point, which is, that there ſhall be a glorious and comfortable Change. This cannot be diſputed; though whatever Bleſſings the World in general may receive, does not exclude a particular Pre-eminence reſerved for *Jeruſalem*.

19. *And I will rejoice in Jeruſalem, and joy in my People; and the Voice of weeping ſhall be no more heard in her, nor the Voice of crying.*—The old City, having been remarkably diſtinguiſhed for God's heavy Judgments and Plagues, the Prophet therefore notes, for the Comfort of the Inhabitants of the new City, that it ſhall be free from all Afflictions: The Days of her Mourning are then ended, as he ſays, Chap. 60. v. 20.

20. *There ſhall be no more thence an Infant of Days, nor an old Man that hath not filled his Days: For the Child ſhall die an hundred Years old, but the Sinner being an hundred Years old, ſhall be accurſed.*—This may be beſt explained by the 4th and 5th Verſes of *Zechariah*'s 8th Chapter.

21, 22. *And they ſhall build Houſes and inhabit them; and they ſhall plant Vineyards, and eat the Fruit of them. They ſhall not build, and another inhabit; they ſhall not plant, and another eat: For as the Days of a Tree are the Days of my People, and mine Elect ſhall long enjoy the Work of their Hands.*--Signifying, if not a longer Life, at leaſt that every body ſhall quietly enjoy the Fruits of their Labour: There is then no more Violence, Waſting, nor Deſtruction, (*Iſaiah* lx. 18.) but all ſit down ſecurely under their Vine and their Fig-tree, (*Iſaiah* ii. and *Micah* iv.) the Swords being beaten into Plough-ſhares, and the Spears into Pruning-hooks, the Nations learning War no more. All the Weapons of War are burnt, as *Ezekiel* expreſſes it, Chap. 39, and Peace is eſtabliſhed in the Earth; which coincides with the Reſtoration of the *Jews* and the *Fullneſs* of the *Gentiles*, and invincibly proves the Weakneſs and Ignorance of thoſe who imagine that the Race of *Iſrael* will not be converted till near the End of the World, if by the *End* they mean the *general Conflagration.*

Let us now examine the ſecond Proof of your third Section, which you take from *Iſaiah* ix. 6, 7.

'*For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is* '*given, and the Government ſhall be upon his* '*Shoulder: And his Name ſhall be called Won-* '*derful, Counſellor, the mighty God, the ever-* '*laſting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the* '*Encreaſe of his Government and Peace there ſhall* '*be no End, upon the Throne of* David *and upon* '*his Kingdom, to order it, and to eſtabliſh it with* '*Judgment and with Juſtice, from henceforth* '*even for ever. The Zeal of the Lord of Hoſts* '*will perform this.*

Here we have indeed a comfortable and ſublime Idea of what the *Meſſiah*'s Kingdom ſhall be; but I cannot allow this Prophecy to have been yet fulfilled in all Points. When inſpired Men ſpeak of the Throne of *David*, muſt we underſtand the capital City of the *Fourth* Monarchy? If ſuch arbitrary Interpretations were allowable, the ſacred Volumes, which were deſigned to bring Mankind to Peace, Unity and Concord in this World, and to eternal Happineſs hereafter, would be productive of a worſe than *Babel Confuſion*: At this Rate we might allegorize the whole Bible into rank Nonſenſe or Blaſphemy.

Your third Proof is from *Iſaiah* xxxv. 4, 5, *&c.* '*Behold your God will come* — — — *he* '*will come and ſave you.*' [The Prophet ſays, that God will come with *Vengeance*; but why you declined mentioning that Circumſtance of his coming, is beſt known to yourſelf.] '*Then* '*the Eyes of the Blind ſhall be opened*, &c. *And* '*a Highway ſhall be there, and it ſhall be called* '*the*

'*the Way of Holineſs; the Unclean ſhall not paſs over it, the Wayfaring Men, tho' Fools, ſhall not err therein.*'—Therefore, according to your Method of expounding the Scriptures, believe and practiſe whatever the *Roman* Church dictates, and ye cannot miſs the Way to Heaven.

But, in order to underſtand the 35th of *Iſaiah*, we muſt give a little Attention to the preceding Chapter. In theſe two Chapters I think we have, not the *Planting* of the Church of *Chriſt*, but its *Reſtoration*, the Way to which is paved by God's ſignal Vengeance on all who would not have him to reign over them: And this, you know, was not done in the primitive Times of Chriſtianity, nor in any Age ſince. The following Paſſages from the 34th Chapter make it plainer than any thing I can ſay.

1. *Come near, ye Nations, to hear, and hearken ye People: Let the Earth hear, and all that is therein; the World, and all Things that come forth of it.*

2. *For the Indignation of the Lord is upon all Nations, and his Fury upon all their Armies: He hath utterly deſtroyed them, he hath delivered them to the Slaughter.*

8. *For it is the Day of the Lord's Vengeance, and the Year of Recompences for the Controverſy of* Zion.

The Scripture being beſt expounded by Scripture, ſuch as want farther Light into thoſe Paſ-

ſages

ſages may conſult *Iſaiah* ii. *Jer.* xxv. *Ezek.* xxxviii and xxxix. *Micah* iv. *Revel.* xix. As for the Remainder of *Iſaiah*'s 34th Chapter, it may be partly explained by the 18th of the *Apocalypſe*, where St. *John* borrows ſome of that Prophet's Expreſſions in denouncing God's Judgments againſt modern *Babylon.* This ſignal Vengeance being executed, then we ſee, in *Iſaiah* xxxv. the peaceable and glorious Eſtate of the Church, with a particular reſpect to *Jeruſalem*, as the following Verſes evince.

9. *No Lion ſhall be found there, nor any ravenous Beaſt ſhall go up thereon; it ſhall not be found there: But the redeemed of the Lord ſhall walk there.*—Alluding perhaps, by Way of Contraſt, (if ſuch an Interpretation be warrantable) to that See which pretends to be the Seat of *Chriſt*'s Vicar, where many a Lion and ravenous Beaſt has been found, ſuch as *Gregory* vii. *Boniface* viii. &c. &c.

10. *And the ranſom'd of the Lord ſhall return and come to Zion with Songs and everlaſting Joy upon their Heads: They ſhall obtain Joy and Gladneſs, and Sorrow and Sighing ſhall fly away.*

Your 4th and 5th Proofs being taken out of *Iſaiah*'s 54th and 60th Chapters, they require no Notice from me in this Place, as I have already diſpatched you on the Subject of thoſe two Chapters. Proceed we then to your ſixth Proof, which is from *Ezek.* xxxvii. 24, 26.

 ' *David*

'*David my Servant* (that is *Chriſt*, who is of 'the Houſe of *David*) *ſhall be King over them*; '*and they ſhall all have one Shepherd: They ſhall* '*alſo walk in my Judgments, and obſerve my* '*Statutes, and do them* — — — *Moreover, I* '*will make a Covenant of Peace with them; it* '*ſhall be an everlaſting Covenant with them:* '*And I will place them, and multiply them,* '*and will ſet my Sanctuary in the Midſt of them* '*for evermore.*' This, you ſay, not only implies the perpetual Viſibility of the Church, but alſo her Infallibility: But, in my Judgment, your Way of reaſoning ſeems to imply, that Men muſt be great Fools, or ſomething worſe, before they can ſet up for Infallibility. Any honeſt, ſenſible Man may ſee, in this Chapter of *Ezekiel*, a plain, expreſs Promiſe to bring the whole Houſe of *Iſrael* to the Knowledge of *Chriſt*; and that from the Accompliſhment of this Promiſe we muſt date the glorious and triumphant Eſtate of the Church on Earth. Nay, the very Verſe between the two which you thought would anſwer your End, puts it quite out of Diſpute, that the Prophet means a general Return of the Tribes of *Iſrael* to their own Land, upon their embracing the Goſpel: And their being united with the *Gentiles*, under one Head, *Chriſt*, may be gathered from the whole Scope of the Chapter. You yourſelf, Sir, ſeem to have been ſenſible that the 25th Verſe is ſufficient to overthrow your Inferences, otherwiſe you had not ſkipt over it: But ſuffer me to tell you, that its obvious Connection with thoſe between which it lies, intitled it to a Place in your Work. However, I am willing to excuſe the Omiſſion; the

Badneſs

Badneſs of the Cauſe might not admit of a more candid Way of proceeding : And beſides, when Men have once attained to Infallibility, they need not take much Care how they reaſon, nor how they apply the Scripture. Hence it is that we are to take *Mount Zion* and *Jeruſalem* for *Rome*, and the Land of *Canaan* for St. *Peter*'s *Patrimony* or the *Pope*'s Territories. If you think my Reflections too harſh, pleaſe to accept of the following Verſes in the *ſame* Chapter of *Ezekiel*, as an Excuſe for it.

21. *Thus ſaith the Lord God, Behold, I will take the Children of Iſrael from among the Heathen whither they be gone, and will gather them on every Side, and bring them into their own Land.* —So evidently applicable to the *Jews* alone, that the moſt ſubtil Sophiſter cannot warp it to any other Senſe.

22. *And I will make them one Nation in the Land upon the Mountains of Iſrael, and one King ſhall be King to them all : And they ſhall be no more two Nations, neither ſhall they be divided into two Kingdoms any more at all.*—Before the *Babyloniſh* Captivity they formed two diſtinct Sovereignties, the Kingdom of *Judah* and that of *Iſrael :* But after their *laſt* Reſtoration (the Return from *Babylon* being out of the Queſtion here) there will be no ſuch Diviſion ; neither will the chief Cauſe of it, *Idolatry*, be ever found amongſt them, as we ſee in the next Verſe.

23. *Neither ſhall they defile themſelves any more with their Idols, nor with their deteſtable Things, nor with any of their Tranſgreſſions ; But I will*

ſave them out of all their dwelling Places, wherein they have ſinn'd, and will cleanſe them: So ſhall they be my People, and I will be their God.

25. *And they ſhall dwell in the Land that I have given unto Jacob my Servant, wherein your Fathers have dwelt, and they ſhall dwell therein, even they and their Children, and their Children's Children for ever, and my Servant David ſhall be their Prince for ever.*—This *David* being underſtood, both by *Chriſtians* and *Jews*, to be the *Meſſiah*, I need only remind you here of the ridiculous Notion, that the Reſtoration of the latter will not be till near the End of the World: Whereas any Man may ſee that they and their Poſterity, for many Generations, are to dwell in that very Land which *Moſes* led them to, and *Joſhua* put them in Poſſeſſion of.

28. *And the Heathen ſhall know that I the Lord do ſanctify Iſrael, when my Sanctuary ſhall be in the Midſt of them for evermore.*

Such as may want to be better ſatisfied that you have groſsly miſapplied the 24th and 26th Verſes of *Ezekiel*'s 37th Chapter, need but ſtudy the 36th Chapter, from which I extract only two Paſſages here, to excite them to it.

10. *And I will multiply Men upon you, all the Houſe of Iſrael, even all of it, and the Cities ſhall be inhabited, and the Waſtes ſhall be built.*

11. *And I will multiply upon you Man and Beaſt, and they ſhall encreaſe and bring Fruit, and I will ſettle you after your old Eſtates, and will*

do better unto you than at your Beginnings, and ye ſhall know that I am the Lord.

Having thus turned againſt you all the Paſſages of the *Old Teſtament* which you bring as Proofs that your Communion muſt needs be the true Church of *Chriſt*, I leave your Proofs from the *New Teſtament*, as premiſed at my ſetting out, to be taken into Conſideration by ſuch as have more Leiſure, and are better qualified than I am for a fuller and more accurate Refutation of your Work; which they will find an eaſy Taſk, provided they don't ſlight the Foundation I have built upon: And this I would recommend to the *Engliſh* Clergy in particular, who, if I conjecture right, are in more Danger of a Reſtoration of *Popery*, than of the Eſtabliſhment of *Judaiſm*, which ſome People apprehend will be the Fruits of a late Act of Parliament, if not ſpeedily repealed.

I muſt not take my Leave of you without making ſome Apology for the Tartneſs with which I have treated you. Be pleaſed, then, to underſtand, that tho' I have made Choice of the Epiſtolary Stile on this Occaſion, you need not take in Dudgeon any of my Reflections, even where I detect you in blundering or prevaricating. I acknowledge that no Doctor of your Party could have better maintained the pretended Infallibility of the *Roman* Church; conſequently, your Miſtakes, whether wilful or not, are chargeable upon the whole Body that lays claim to an unerring Authority in Matters of Faith; and you may ſtand acquitted of Ignorance or Diſingenuity, as you have only collected and delivered

delivered the Sentiments and Arguments of a Society whom you believe infallible.

As for this Performance of mine, I have not Vanity enough to think it faultless. I am sensible some Criticks will say that the Subject is treated too superficially: In answer to which I shall only observe, that the most voluminous Work, were it as well connected, and as plain as mathematical Demonstrations, would make no Impression on the Slothful, the Proud, the Covetous, *&c.* Brevity is what I have endeavoured at, being persuaded that if what I have done is right in the main, others will be excited to improve upon it; but if wrong, then the shorter the better: It will hurt no Man's Pocket, nor rob him of above an Hour, if he thinks it not worth a second Reading. Of *human* Compositions we can only say, that they are the *best* which have the *fewest* Faults; and whether mine be *good* or *bad*, that you may make a *proper* Use of it, is the unfeigned Wish of

Your humble Servant,

A COSMOPOLITE.